

September 2012

## Gaspee Day: Fireworks

John Long  
johnlong429@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Long, John (2012) "Gaspee Day: Fireworks," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 24: Iss. 4, Article 16.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6184>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

#### Your Links:

FT July 10, 2012 USA edition, front page.

<http://arstechnica.com/apple/2012/07/judge-to-apple-tell-uk-consumers-samsung-didnt-infringe-on-ipad-design/>

<http://tech2.in.com/news/general/apple-samsung-lawsuit-to-go-on-for-another-year-fitch-ratings/330302>

#### Where the Wild Things Are: Vade Mecum Edition

Just before **Maurice Sendak** passed away a few months ago, he appeared on the **Colbert Report**. It was taped from **Sendak's** home, and **Colbert** chose to softside the author with praise and admiration. **Sendak** was obviously in tune with **Colbert**; his face showed like **Andy Rooney** confronted with **Ali G**, but his answers were thoughtful and warm.

**Colbert** had an objective; he had just published his own children's book *I Am a Pole (and So Can You)*, so perhaps he wanted to cast perception that he too was a children's author. We can't be sure that **Sendak** saw the woman dancing on a pole in a strip lounge, but **Sendak** strikes as an author who would take the time.

They didn't talk business at all, but they did explore the written word, illustration, and wonderment. They talked reading and imagination.

#### Gaspee Day: Fireworks\*

Moonlight —  
opalescence —  
zigzagging between tall pilings,  
Its pale ribbon  
an elongated curvature  
oscillating  
beneath the sea wall.

Families, & children gather at the foot of Bayside  
anticipating a brilliant display.  
Northwest winds push clouds offshore:  
a magnesium arc rises over high tide,  
Rock Island and the breakwater.  
Fireworks begin.

Ooh's and aah's reach across  
the cove's velvet amplitude;  
reverberations echo along docks, power boats, and sail boats.  
Yellow, red, green, blue, and white luminosities;  
brilliant sparks, drooping fountains, whirling galaxies —  
ancient alchemy —  
cacophony of motion and emotion —  
scintillations of sodium, calcium, strontium, barium, copper  
rise at acute angles.

Side-by-side with a Gibbous moon,  
fireworks reach a crescendo —  
then stillness —  
plumes of sulfur and charcoal drift down the bay,  
families and villagers spontaneously  
begin clapping and singing:  
God bless America,  
land that I love...

©2002-2008, *Seaward Edge*, all rights reserved by  
John Long, 31 Lawn Ave., Warwick, RI 02888-1621  
<JohnLong429@gmail.com>

\*Celebrating the burning of the HMS Gaspee on June 9, 1772  
off Namquid Point (now Gaspee Point), Narragansett Bay.

**Colbert's** book is available in eBook versions. None of **Sendak's** are. One wonders what **Sendak** would have made of this had **Colbert** asked.

What comes out in print and what comes out in electronic format — and which format — is all about the crazy wild world of publishing. Publishers are guessing, checking the receipts, and guessing again.

*I Am a Pole (and So Can You)* looks nice on **Kindle's Fire** and on the **iPad**. The electronic version doesn't short the reader any of the visual impact of the print edition.

Except in one place. Just opposite the title page, the book's owner can fill in personal details of who owns the book and when it was received. This follows a children's publishing tradition of bestowing ownership on the child and presumably a lifelong and significant relationship to the book.

Sadly, at the moment you can't fill in your e-edition. Perhaps there will be an app for that in the future, but somehow it just feels like it just won't be the same. When it feels the same, we'll know we're as old as **Maurice Sendak** and part of a beloved and by-gone era.

Coda: **Rosenbach Museum & Library** in Philadelphia is the repository for over 10,000 of **Sendak's** works. It is also the repository for **Colbert's** book.

Soon book buyers, electronic or otherwise, will be paying sales tax in most states. Now for volume readers this will be felt because that \$9.99 is going up and up on its own, and the free shipping is not going to offset this increase. As a countering move, **Amazon** — the main target of state taxing — has moved warehouses into states. Some states are now collecting millions in heretofore lost revenues. **Amazon**, though short this money, is challenging local retailers — from bookstores to **Wal-Mart** — in same-day delivery of its often deeply-discounted merchandise.

It's hard to pick a winner in these wild times. Perhaps libraries, especially public libraries, could same-day deliver contemporary reading to patrons in a version of the academic's patron-driven acquisition? Why not use **Amazon's** same-day service to deliver your patron a book that you'll use again?

What we have in book publishing these days is rock and roll constant change. How we read, how we buy what we read, how we share what we read, even how we read about reading — all a perpetual motion machine of change.

You've got to admit it's fun to learn one day that **Microsoft** is bank-rolling **Barnes and Noble** to push its e-content via the **Nook** and on another to read about yet another court case in the sorting out of who can do what online with books.

Look to Facebook to innovate here. Finally reaching adulthood with its IPO (interesting they've appointed older business people to sit on the board, perhaps to help its twenty-something wunderkinds to take it to payday), Facebook offers a great platform, especially for online reading communities and book clubs. What stronger affinity is there than shared delight in a book?

Right now readers, both those who read from the cloud and those who use more earthbound means, have a rich array of choices. The only downside to this is how are you going to keep track of all this? Every reader, a book — who would have thought this would again come around as the big question? Librarians, let's get busy!

#### Your Links:

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/406796/january-24-2012/grim-colbert-tyles-with-maurice-sendak-pt-1>

[http://www.slate.com/articles/business/small\\_business/2012/07/amazon\\_same\\_day\\_delivery\\_how\\_the\\_e\\_commerce\\_giant\\_will\\_destroy\\_local\\_retail.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/business/small_business/2012/07/amazon_same_day_delivery_how_the_e_commerce_giant_will_destroy_local_retail.html) 🐼